MARVEL REMEMBERS

JOHN ROMITA

MARVEL 1

WHAT IF...? DARK

MOON KNIGHT

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EDGAR SALAZAR
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John Romita

1930 – 2023

Marvel mourns the passing of comic-book artist John Romita Sr., whose work on *Amazing Spider-Man* helped make the character a worldwide sensation. In his work as Marvel's art director, he designed the Punisher and Wolverine and served as mentor for countless artists during his decades-long tenure with the company.

Romita had a profound effect on everyone he met at Marvel. He was always kind and warm and served as an inspiration to all who knew him or followed his work. Romita helped build the Marvel Universe as we know it, and he will be greatly missed.

DECADES OF AMAZING WORK

John Romita wore many hats at Marvel. His most famous contribution was his run on *Amazing Spider-Man*, including the above cover to the series' landmark fiftieth issue. His association with the character would include drawing the cover of the famed wedding of Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson, *Amazing Spider-Man Annual #21*, seen opposite top right. With Stan Lee, he started the Spider-Man newspaper strip, including the sequence with Kingpin from Sept. 25, 1977, seen opposite center. Behind the scenes, Romita was responsible for designing many of Marvel's most famous characters. At bottom opposite are Romita's costume designs for Black Widow and Wolverine.

"John Romita Sr. was an incomparable artist who brought so many iconic Marvel characters to life on the page and set the tone and look of Marvel's comics for decades. His version of Spider-Man has inspired so many of us at Marvel Studios. Our thoughts are with his family and the generations of artists and fans who fell in love with the characters he drew."

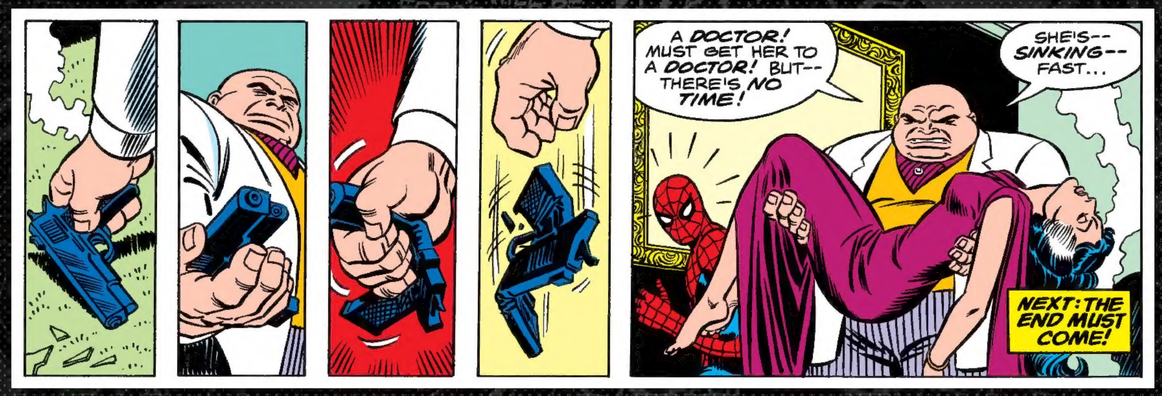
— KEVIN FEIGE

"I was recently able to fawn over some of John Romita Sr.'s original Spider-Man pages, and the word that kept popping into my mind as I marveled over his linework was 'timeless.' His style was such a departure from what had come before, which John did say made him nervous, but one that came to define the look of Peter, Spider-Man, MJ, Gwen and everyone else in their orbit. And the same was true for every Marvel character John designed, penciled and inked. Whether as an artist or art director, John's work influenced generations of comic book artists. With his passing, the comic industry loses a true legend, but just like his artwork, his legacy will remain timeless."

— C.B. CEBULSKI

"When you close your eyes and picture Spider-Man, you're probably picturing a John Romita Sr. Spider-Man. From his debut of the character in *Amazing Spider-Man #39*, the subsequent fifty issues of art, more than a hundred covers and the work he did on the newspaper strip, John defined Spidey for generations of people around the world. That would be enough for anyone else, but John was also an excellent art director, a fantastic father, a doting grandfather and a gentleman. All of us making Spider-Man comics, and Marvel Comics in general, work in his shadow and strive to live up to the example of the legend, Jazzy John Romita."

— NICK LOWE



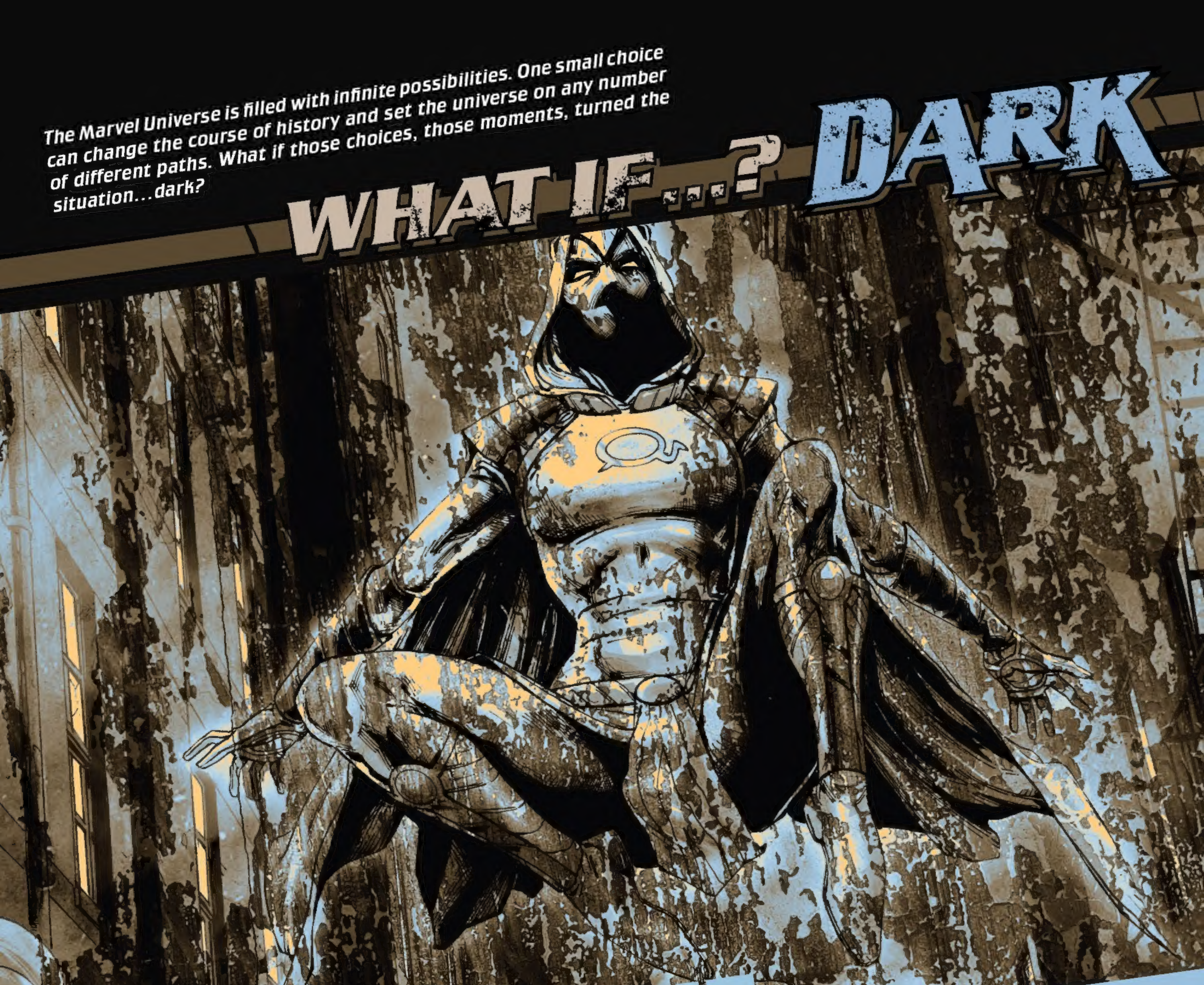
"One of the highlights of my career was working with John Romita Sr. I couldn't believe that my 25-year-old self was working and interacting with him, and what made it even better was that he was so considerate and kind – something that has stuck with me ever since, among many other memories with him. It was one of the rare moments where you meet one of your heroes and he exceeds your expectations in every possible way.

His contributions to Marvel's pantheon and culture are immense, and he will be sorely missed. He was a great and kind man who truly made the world a better place. My deepest condolences to Virginia, Johnny and the Romita family."

— DAN BUCKLEY

The Marvel Universe is filled with infinite possibilities. One small choice can change the course of history and set the universe on any number of different paths. What if those choices, those moments, turned the situation…dark?

WHAT IF…? DARK



MOON KNIGHT

*Mercenary **MARC SPECTOR** died and was reborn in the shadow of **KHONSHU**, the Egyptian god of the moon. Spector became **MOON KNIGHT**, the Fist of Khonshu, to fight evil. Marc's girlfriend, **MARLENE ALRAUNE**, was kidnapped by his old enemy **RAUL BUSHMAN**. Marc pursued the pair to the nation of Burunda, where a fight for survival rages…*

Note: The events of this story deviate from **MARC SPECTOR: MOON KNIGHT #3.*

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THE NATION OF BURUNDA.

I AM KHONSHU.

EVERY DECISION HAS INFINITE OUTCOMES...

...AND NOT ALL OUTCOMES ARE POSITIVE.

...MOON KNIGHT.

THIS SWORD IS THE *TRADITIONAL WEAPON* OF MY PEOPLE.

THANKS FOR THE HISTORY LESSON, BUSHMAN, BUT I'M HERE FOR *MARLENE.*

DEFEAT *ME,* AND THE WOMAN IS YOURS.

THWACK

YOU LOST ONE OF YOUR TRUNCHEONS, MARC...THAT DOES NOT SEEM *FAIR.*

NEITHER DOES THE *BATTALION* YOU'VE GOT AT THE READY...

...BUT I THINK I CAN MANAGE.

KA-CHAK

MY MEN HAVE ORDERS TO STAND DOWN, SPECTOR.

THIS IS JUST BETWEEN *US.*

GNNF!

GAH!

SLISH

FIRST BLOOD... IT ALWAYS TASTES BEST.

DOESN'T MATTER WHO GETS THE FIRST CUT...

WHAK

...BUT WHO'S *LEFT STANDING.*

UGH...

FWR

FWR

FWR

ARGH!

TNK

TNK

SQUELCH

WANT ME TO GIVE YOU A SEC TO GET YOUR BEARINGS?

IT ONLY SEEMS FAIR.

THIS IS *NO GAME,* SPECTOR.

GRAH!

SLICE

CLOSE! BUT YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANOTHER CHANCE.

I DO NOT NEED YOUR PITY!

THEN HOW ABOUT A FEW CRACKED RIBS?

KRAK

AND A BROKEN NOSE!

CHOK

THUD

NOW WHERE'S MARLENE?!

MARLENE'S RIGHT *HERE*, LOVER!

KILL THEM ALL!

BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA

GWRK!

BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA BRADDA

NOT GONNA HAPPEN, BUDDY.

I'VE GOT HIM, MARC. GET DOWN.

ACK!

MARLENE!

HUK.

"IN ONE WORLD, MARC SPECTOR--MY AVATAR--DEFEATED RAUL BUSHMAN...

"...AND HE AND MARLENE ALRAUNE LEFT BURUNDA WITH THE HELP OF JEAN-PAUL DUCHAMP.

"BUT IN *THIS* WORLD, THE CONFLICT CAME TO A *VERY DIFFERENT* CONCLUSION."

NO!

WIPWIP

WIPWIPWIP

MARC!

THOK

C'MON!

IT'S OKAY--GNNF-- MARC...

BRADDA BRADDA

BRADDA BRADDA

OH GOD.

YOU'RE... YOU'RE GONNA BE FINE, MARC.

LOST... LOTTA BLOOD...

NO, YOU'RE →SNIFF← GONNA BE OKAY. YOU'LL--

IT'S... *OVER*, KID.

DON'T YOU *SAY* THAT.

FRENCHIE... TAKE CARE 'A HER...Y'HEAR ME?

OUI, MARC. JE PROMETS.

MARLENE...

...YOU'LL BE →SNIFF← *JUST FINE.*

MARC?

NO!

LATER.

NONE OF US SHOULD BE JUDGED BY OUR WORST MISTAKES...

...*ESPECIALLY* THOSE WHO SEEK CONTRITION.

YES, MARC SPECTOR DID AWFUL THINGS...BUT HE WAS HAUNTED BY A *CONSCIENCE* THAT TURNED HIS LIFE AROUND.

MARC WASN'T JUST A MAN...HE WAS A *HERO.*

MARC SPECTOR

MANY OF YOU HERE--YOU'RE *HEROES.*

AND MARC WAS *LUCKY* TO BE AMONG YOUR RANKS.

THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE FOR HIM.

GOODBYE, MARC.

MAY YOUR MEMORY BE FOR A BLESSING.

LATER.

I WAS DELUDED IN THINKING THIS WOULD LAST FOREVER...

...THAT MARC WAS SOMEHOW *IMMUNE* TO DEATH...

...WITH OR *WITHOUT* YOU, KHONSHU.

I WON'T MAKE THAT MISTAKE AGAIN--NOT THAT IT *MATTERS*...

...BECAUSE NOW I HAVE *NOTHING* LEFT TO LOSE.

PTOO

YOU *BASTARD!*

YOU COULD HAVE *SAVED* HIM!

KRCK

HE GAVE UP *EVERYTHING* FOR YOU!

AND YOU PUNISH HIM LIKE *THIS?!*

CRMBLE

YOU DON'T *DESERVE* TO BE A GOD!

KERASH

→SOB← WHY...?

WHY, MARC...?

YOU ARE HUNTING MY [illegible].

WHO SAID THAT?

THAT GLOW-- IT FEELS LIKE...THE *SUN* ON A SUMMER DAY...

YOU HAVE ESCAPED INTO DARKNESS.

IT'S... *COMFORTING...*

[illegible] ARE BATHED IN THE GLORY OF MY LIGHT.

WHO... WHO *ARE* YOU?

I AM RA.

...AND I PROVIDE LIGHT TO THOSE WHO CANNOT SEE THEIR WAY.

BUT WHY WOULD YOU HELP *ME?*

[illegible] A GREAT LIGHT IN YOU, HEALING ALREADY.

IT IS A LIGHT THAT CAN BRING OTHERS OUT OF THIS DARKNESS.

HOW? YOU PLEDGE YOURSELF TO HELPING OTHERS.

...TO ME?

...

YES.

THEN PERHAPS YOUR [illegible] YOU SHALL BE.

LUMINARY

RELEASE YOURSELF FROM THE DARKNESS.

SO THAT YOU MAY BRING MY LIGHT TO OTHERS.

I WILL BRING THEM FROM THE SHADOWS, RA.

I *PROMISE.*

MARLENE ALRAUNE DID BRING LIGHT TO THOSE IN THE SHADOWS.

"SHE BROUGHT HOPE TO THOSE IN NEED...

"...AND IN DOING SO, SHE FOUND SOLACE IN THE GRIPS OF A GOD...

"...NOT I, OF COURSE.

GREAT JOB, LUMINARY.

"BUT GRIEF ALWAYS NEEDS AN OUTLET.

THANK YOU, DETECTIVE FLINT.

"AND THE SAME LIGHT THAT ENRICHES SOME...

"...CAN ALSO BURN HOT."

GIMME YOUR--

YOU LIKE PREYING ON OTHERS FROM THE *SHADOWS?*

LET'S SEE HOW WELL YOU DO IN THE *LIGHT.*

I CAN'T SEE!

ME NEITHER!

FEEL THE TOUCH OF *RA!*

AARGH!

LET HIS LIGHT BURN INTO YOU.

WHUD

THWUMP

I'M →PANT← DONE, FRENCHIE.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BRING PEOPLE OUT OF THE DARKNESS, EH?

YOU GIVE *MARC* THIS MUCH OF A HASSLE?

KRAK

ARE YOU DONE, MON AMIE?

SPENCE SAYS YOU HAVE TO BE BACK IN TIME FOR THE ART AUCTION.

LATER.

I TAKE IT EVERYTHING IS ALL SET FOR THE AUCTION, SPENCE?

OF COURSE.

I SHOULD REALLY DO A LAP AROUND THE PARTY... SEE IF I CAN SUSS OUT THE *SERIOUS* BUYERS.

THANK YOU.

HE'S *WORRIED* ABOUT YOU.

YOU WORRY ENOUGH FOR *EVERYONE.*

IT'S MY DUTY.

I'M NOT YOUR *MISSION,* JEAN-PAUL.

I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN--

I NEVER MUCH ENJOYED THESE PARTIES--EVEN WHEN MARC THREW THEM. *YOU?*

THEY'RE JUST ANOTHER REMINDER THAT HE'S *GONE.*

MISS MARLENE, THERE'S A GENTLEMAN WHO WISHES TO SPEAK WITH YOU IN *PRIVATE.*

HE CLAIMS TO BE A REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE *BURUNDAN EMBASSY.*

TAKE ME TO HIM, SAMUELS.

YOU WANT THAT I SHOULD COME WITH YOU?

WE KNOW IT'S NOT BUSHMAN. HE'S TOO CRAVEN TO COME OUT OF HIDING FOR THIS.

WELL, HELL HATH NO FURY AN' ALL THAT...

WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU, LIEUTENANT?

YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

I REMEMBER YOU FROM WHEN YOUR GENERAL BUSHMAN TOOK ME CAPTIVE.*

WELL, THEN WE CAN DISPATCH WITH PLEASANTRIES, CAN'T WE, MS. ALRAUNE?

IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIFE, YOU WILL ***STOP*** BUYING ARTIFACTS FROM MY COUNTRY.

YOU COLONIZERS BELIEVE YOU CAN JUST DO WHAT YOU WILL, BUT OUR ***GENERAL BUSHMAN*** DOES ***NOT*** TAKE KINDLY TO--

HE'S A ***COWARD***. HE GOES FROM EMBASSY TO EMBASSY, BUT ONLY IN COUNTRIES WITH NO EXTRADITION.

I'LL DO WHAT I HAVE TO BECAUSE HE DOESN'T HAVE THE ***GUTS*** TO FACE ME FOR WHAT HE'S DONE.

RAUL BUSHMAN TOOK MY FATHER FROM ME--HE TOOK ***MARC*** FROM ME.

THERE'S NO THREAT YOU CAN DOLE OUT THAT'S GONNA SCARE ME.

TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF--

YOU ONLY ***THINK*** YOU ARE NOT AFRAID...

...BUT WE HAVE MANY ***CREATIVE WAYS*** OF INSTILLING FEAR.

*SEE *MARC SPECTOR: MOON KNIGHT #1.* --MARTIN

FWIP

THUD

→CHOKE←

HOW WAS *THAT* FOR CREATIVE?

THIS HAS TO END.

PLEASE... *HELP ME,* RA.

FWUMP

THE BURUNDAN EMBASSY, CAMBODIA.

GAH!

OOF!

WHAM

FRENCHIE, I'M IN.

--BEEN A NEW SUPER HERO IN NEW YORK...

GENERAL...

...THERE'S A PROBLEM.

WHAT IS IT?

WE MAY HAVE A BREACH.

LOCK DOWN--

CHUK

I WONDERED WHEN YOU WOULD COME.

AKH!

HEH...DID YOU MAKE THAT LITTLE OUTFIT YOURSELF?

NO MATTER... YOU WILL NOT SUCCEED.

DON'T BE SO SURE.

FIRST, YOU PILFER OUR CULTURE, THEN YOU COME HERE TO TRY TO *ASSASSINATE* ME?

YOUR RELENTLESS BATTLE AGAINST MY COUNTRY KNOWS NO BOUNDS, WOMAN.

I HAVE NO ISSUE WITH YOUR COUNTRY--JUST *YOU.*

AND IT'S TIME I *FIXED* THAT PROBLEM...

...FOR *GOOD.*

I ONCE STOPPED MARC FROM KILLING YOU.*

*SEE MOON KNIGHT #1 (1980). --MARTIN

MY THANKS WAS ALLOWING YOU TO LIVE SO LONG.

SKRIPP

DO YOU REMEMBER THIS?

THIS IS THE KNIFE YOUR FATHER USED TO TRY TO SCARE ME...THE NIGHT I *KILLED* HIM.

"I SHOULD HAVE MELTED IT DOWN WITH THE REST OF THE GOLD YOU FOUND IN THAT TOMB...

"...BUT I WANTED TO SEE THE LOOK ON YOUR FACE..."

...WHEN I *KILL* YOU WITH IT!

YOU *WON'T* GET THE CHANCE!

WHAM

GAH!

WHERE *ARE* YOU, WOMAN?

HEHEHE... I GOT YOU...

GNNF!

DID YOU THINK I WOULD GO EASY ON YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE A *WOMAN?*

UGH...

POK

I WILL SEND YOU TO YOUR *FATHER.*

I WILL SEND YOU TO *SPECTOR.*

→CHOKE←

STAY STRONG, MY LUMINARY.

USE THE LIGHT WITHIN YOU!

YOU →KOFF← FIRST...

AHHH!

SHUNT

UHHHH...

THIS IS FOR *YOU*, MARC.

S.L.K

SLISH

GWMP

IT IS DONE, MY LUMINARY.

READY...FOR EXTRACTION, →KOFF← FRENCHIE...

LATER.

NOW THAT BUSHMAN IS DEAD, SHE'S ALL DONE, *EH?*

I HAVE NO CLUE, SIR.

I COULD HAVE...I ***SHOULD HAVE*** STOPPED HER, SAMUELS.

MARC WAS MY BEST FRIEND.

AND IT FEELS LIKE I DID ***NOTHING*** TO AVENGE HIS MEMORY.

DOES THAT MAKE ME A BAD PERSON?

IF YOU'LL PERMIT ME, SIR...

...WE ALL GRIEVE IN OUR ***OWN WAY.***

YOU DID WHAT YOU COULD TO PROTECT MISS MARLENE, BUT THIS WAS ALL ***HER*** CHOICE.

COME...LET'S GIVE HER SOME SPACE.

I'LL PUT THE KETTLE ON.

THANK YOU, SAMUELS.

S-S-T. MY LUMINARY—

WHERE... AM I?

HEY THERE, KID.

IT CAN'T BE...

MARC? MARC, IS IT REALLY YOU?

IT'S ME.

I'VE MISSED YOU, LOVER.

MARC!

WHAT THE--?

MARC...I'M STUCK. I CAN'T *MOVE!*

PLEASE... *HELP* ME!

YOU DON'T NEED *MY HELP,* MARLENE.

YOU'RE ALMOST THERE.

NO, NO, I *CAN'T* LOSE YOU AGAIN.

YOU'RE NOT GONNA LOSE ME...

I'LL *ALWAYS* BE HERE...

...JUST TAKE MY HAND...

ARGH!

MARLENE! MON DIEU--

MARLENE ALRAUNE IS GONE!

FOR I AM NOW THE SUN INCARNATE...

...I AM RA!

NO MATTER THE TIMELINE, THE SUN *AND* MOON WILL ALWAYS RISE.

AND WITH THEIR *LIGHT* COMES *SHADOWS.*

HOW ONE ATTENDS TO THOSE SHADOWS DETERMINES THEIR OWN FATE.

SO BE MINDFUL OF THE SHADOWS...

...AND THE *LIGHT.*

END.

NEXT

WHAT IF...? DARK CARNAGE

MARC SPECTOR: MOON KNIGHT #3

IF YOU WANT TO READ THE CLASSIC TALE THAT INSIRED THIS ISSUE!

MOON KNIGHT #27

AND CHECK OUT MOON KNIGHT IN HIS CURRENT ONGOING SERIES...

MOON KNIGHT: CITY OF THE DEAD #2

...AND IN THIS SPECIAL LIMITED SERIES!

ON SALE IN AUGUST!

ZONE